



Nigel Armstrong and Federico M. Federici, eds. *Translating Voices, Translating Regions*. Rome, Aracne, 2006, 421 p.

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Car personne ne croira, j'espère, que les membres de l'académie suédoise lisent tous les nobélisables dans le texte...

Rainier Grutman
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The title of the volume derives from the homonymous international conference held in Rieti, Italy, in September of 2005. The collection of 23 edited papers (16 in English, 4 in Italian, and 3 in French) is divided into two sections: one titled "Regionalized Voices in Audiovisual Translation" and the other "Translating Regionalized Voices in Literature." As the editors state, the aim of the conference, and subsequently of the volume, was to explore practices and theories in the translation of marginal voices. While this aspect of the project covers relatively familiar ground in Translation Studies, the extension of the analysis beyond literature to include audio-visual translation, film dubbing, and subtitling represents an important foray into somewhat less familiar terrain and produces interesting, and surprising, results. While they acknowledge the difficulties inherent in dealing with social encoding in the process of moving between standard languages, the editors perhaps overstate the case when they claim that "difficulties of this kind, though severe, pale into insignificance when compared with (...) translation of regional and marginal languages" (p. 15). Nonetheless, the papers do investigate important aspects of the translation process in this regard and offer significant insights into this research area.

Section one is subdivided into two parts: the first, "Choices and constraints in film translation," deals with the degree to which translators apply strategies in the rendering of minority languages in audiovisual adaptations and rewritings of texts, from Cuban-Spanish to English, regional dialects and sociolects in the films of Ken Loach, English subtitles in Rossellini's *Roma città aperta*, and the iterations of poet Pablo Neruda as fictional character, from Spanish play to English text to Italian text and

eventually to the film *Il postino*. The second part, focusing on issues and problems associated with rendering Italian dialects into English, is aptly titled, “How Italians see the world and how the world sees Italians.” Explored are the challenges of capturing the symbolic use of dialects by Fellini in *Amarcord*, technical and linguistic problems in dubbing the unusual language of the Italian-American characters in *The Sopranos*, the transmission of accents and regional expressions in dubbing and subtitling of English-language television programs (*The Nanny*, *Family Ties*, *Dallas*, *Wheel of Fortune*) into Italian, and current tendencies in Italian dubbing with respect to such films as *My Fair Lady* in terms of avoiding the use of Italian dialects to represent the Cockney accent. The essays in the third part, “Standard and regionalized voices, the case of French,” explore similar issues in the translation of regional speech, both in dubbing and subtitling practices, when the source or the target text is in French. These include French adaptations of Italian films, in particular the classics of Neorealism, the question of dubbing “that takes into account semiotic functions of visual, linguistic and auditory units” (p. 181) in the French adaptation of *Bruce Almighty*, and translation of the shifts from “high” to “popular” culture references in *The Simpsons*.

Part one of the second section, “Translatability and individual writers,” concerns itself with Italian versions of the English poetry of Tony Harrison and the “domestication-foreignization tightrope” (p. 245) walked by the translator, Calvino’s “practice as a translator of a regionalized and linguistically unique novel (Raymond Queneau’s *Les Fleurs bleues*) and his theoretical stand concerning translation and regionalized literary style” (p. 254), the analysis of style in the work produced by non-native speakers of German *Gastarbeiterliteratur* (guest worker literature), as well as the challenges posed by the dialect poetry of Giuseppe Belli, especially his “risqué” humour. Part two, “Minorities crossing cultural boundaries through translation,” includes essays on the translation of Italian poetry, from Dante to Sanguineti, into Scots, Shakespeare’s hypericonicity in Creole, D.H. Lawrence’s assimilation of the realist lessons of Giovanni Verga in his own translations of the Sicilian’s novels and short stories, and the translation of the voices of border writers, artists,

and filmmakers in the Americas. The final part, “Voices crossing geographical divides,” examines what happens to Gaelic identity in French translations of a play by a “cultural icon from the Gaelic poetic tradition” (p. 379), English translations of Congolese novels, and the use of *italies*, or Italian-English, for rendering the *joual* in Michel Tremblay’s *A toi, pour toujours, ta Marie-Lou*.

The essays propose a range of responses to the central issues raised, from acknowledging the impossibility to making constructive attempts at capturing the specific qualities and socially symbolic functions of so-called minority languages. These various approaches are framed by the theories of Antoine Berman (“Translation and the Trial of the Foreign”) and Lawrence Venuti (*The Translator’s Invisibility* and *The Scandals of Translation*). Indeed, almost half of the essays cite one of these works, in particular the notions of “foreignization” and “domestication” expounded in these writings. In some cases, the call for resistance to domestication of the foreign is seen as an incomplete theory in that it proposes foreignness in terms of the target language and culture, rather than in terms of the source language and culture.

In sum, the excellent essays contained in this volume make a substantial contribution to Translation Studies, while pointing to the fact that research still needs to be done in the area of translating regional voices, lest they continue to be marginalized or “domesticated.”

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